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## THE WANING POWERS OF ART

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DAVID SNEDDEN

Teachers College, Columbia University

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### I

Various critical Americans, aided and abetted frequently by visitors from abroad have for many years been insisting that this country sadly needs more and better art. Our inartistic life has been pitied, denounced, derided, made the object of "uplift." At first, with the confidence of successful frontier folk, we refused to believe that our conditions were as bad as our critics imagined. We were wealthy and reasonably happy. We had national health, and ours was opportunity. We were not keenly conscious of wants which we could not satisfy. We knew little about art, and that little often suggested scroll work, triviality, meretriciousness, even refined sensuality. Artists in all lines as well as their followers among the non-working women who were coming to be the decorations of our rich commercial life, we hardly pretended to understand, but we were sure that we held them and their works in small esteem.

Our critics, however, have achieved their objects. We are no longer complacent over our insensitiveness to art and our art-lacking surroundings. We have become self-conscious, abashed, convicted of many serious aesthetic shortcomings; and we are now eager to amend our ways. We have resolved to give art a fair chance, and to require that our sons and daughters shall not be, as we were, deprived of opportunities to have the satisfactions and to exhibit the cultivation that are alleged to come from seeing, hearing, feeling (and even tasting and smelling) those things which superior judgment and taste call "artistic." We have been gratified when millionaires gave us art galleries. We have been glad to make it possible for our wives and daughters and a few of our sons to travel in Italy, France, and Belgium where "art"

was to be found in largest quantities. Our women's clubs have taken the matter of self-culture in art seriously. Americans no longer have, or at least express, sympathy with the Puritan's pose as to the sinfulness of catering to aesthetic sensibilities.

We have tried especially to develop art education, in the more inclusive sense of the term, as a part of our general education. During the last fifty years popular demand has forced into school and college curricula quite generally much English literature, and some drawing and music. Small but influential groups of our more ambitious citizens have also at times succeeded in having taught in the regular schools, or in special schools and classes organized for the purpose, dramatics, artistic dancing, painting, modeling, artistic craftsmanship, home decoration, and landscape gardening. To each and all of these newly awakened interests Europe has contributed, along with a few first-class exponents, a horde of self-promoting avaricious exploiters of popular credulity and private wealth. Schools and cults and fads have flourished. The decorative women of the rich, the idle and sterile women of the apartment-house dwellers, the ambitious daughters (and a few sons) of families rising rapidly to higher standards of living, the free lances among our intellectually emancipated womanhood, all these have contributed in America toward a vast, collective, conscious striving for more "art" in life, some release from barbarity and vulgarism, some translation hither of European or Japanese standards and methods of execution and capacities for appreciation.

In some instances the results of this striving have been wholesome and profitable, if judged by their effects upon certain small classes or groups of people, in the way of contributing to their collective good-will, earnestness, sincerity, unaffectedness, and standards of moral conduct. We know of a few centers where the cultivation of music has ministered to rather than detracted from neighborliness, social purity, and simplicity. Occasional groups of craftsmen can be found whose members are genuine men and women, unaffected by avarice, jealousy, or besetting impulse to pose. Here and there are moderately gifted writers who have resisted the temptation to produce wares for the largest market,

and who have nevertheless been discovered by a moderate circle of appreciative readers.

But it must be confessed that, viewed in the large, the results of our great campaign of education and uplift in matters artistic appear so far to be disappointing. As users of literature the American people do not yet seem greatly to prefer the better to the worse. We expend millions for short stories and longer novels, and we lionize the writer of a "best seller"; but we provide a poor market and little appreciation for the genuine poet and essayist. We certainly support the drama generously (if we include under that term moving-picture art), but we make no marked demand either for repeated presentations of the great classical dramas or for those modern dramas that exhibit originality of conception and artistic workmanship. Some hundreds of millions of dollars are expended annually to provide music in America, but only a small portion of this is paid to support other than fugitive and tawdry stuff. Our millionaires in a few cities generously support the opera, but whether from genuine desire for the art or from motives of vanity and display, it is at times hard to say. We dance much, but, except when momentarily moved by the appeal of fashion, we are cool toward folk-dancing and art-dancing. The plastic and graphic arts are everywhere taught in public and private schools, and hundreds of our young people of real or imagined talent annually set out to become painters, sculptors, or architects. But our largest expenditures as a people for art products embodying form and color go to magazine publisher, advertiser, bric-a-brac manufacturer, and the long line of caterers to the various appetites for bodily decoration.

Notwithstanding the growth of wealth available for the satisfaction of the less pressing needs of life, and an undoubted desire on the part of educators and a considerable portion of the public for better things artistically, it seems to be true that as a people we are advancing little if at all as respects "love of the best." But those authorities who at times despair of American taste seem almost equally pessimistic regarding prospects in other countries. Are we not told that modernizing of Japan has ruined the fine craftsmanship and cheapened the public taste of that country?

Applied art makes slow progress in England in spite of the millions expended by the agencies that first grouped themselves around South Kensington. Germany, aspiring to conquer a world's commerce, plunges into vast schemes of art education, the quality and permanency of the results of which are seriously challenged even at home. France continues to give to the world a profusion of fine- and applied-art products, but her schools are distracted by cults, and the social mission or significance of even her best art remains yet a matter of uncertainty and debate. Germany maintains perhaps her standards of musical appreciation, but, if her best critics are right, drama, poetry, fiction, and dancing certainly tend there as elsewhere toward lower levels as regards both production and appreciation. And all of this in face of the unquestionable fact that the whole civilized world is (or was before 1914) possessed of vastly more leisure, wealth, and education than ever before!

To educators, publicists, and statesmen, as well as to all persons gifted with sensitiveness toward things artistic, it is a serious and disturbing matter that art as regards its evolution and social vitality seems to be so much in the doldrums. What are the causes of this condition, and what does it portend? In our public schools alone we now expend millions of dollars annually in trying to teach our children to appreciate and desire the better things in literary, musical, graphic, plastic, and terpsichorean art. Are we doomed always to find the ground slipping away from under our feet, and to discover that we are simply modern Mrs. Partingtons sweeping back in utter futility the waves of printed pictures, "movies," "canned music," hackwritten fiction, hotel dancing, and factory-multiplied artistic "utilities"? Must we continue to find, indeed, that as one of the penalties for our sins our art leaders and spokesmen have themselves been afflicted with a confusion of tongues, and have scattered into the wilderness of conflicting cults, irrational counsels, and wilful blindnesses to the essential characteristics of the period in which we live?

The situation is therefore a serious one if we admit that the assumptions which are commonly made as to the social significance and essential need of high standards of art production and appre-

ciation in civilized society are indeed correct. But we must not forget that these assumptions are usually derived from a historical consideration of other civilizations than our own, and chiefly from those representing other stages of evolution than the present in our own. May it not be possible that occidental civilization has reached a stage in its development when the general social need of art of good quality, at least in some of the forms which have counted most in humanizing man and upbuilding societies, is less vital and compelling than was formerly the case? Perhaps the functions of art in ministering to the primal needs of society are not what they once were, and so, as a consequence, while society may still be willing to spend of its energies and resources freely on art, it now refuses to take that art seriously because it cannot make of it a means toward realizing the more serious and worthy things of life. Strong men decline to make the production of art works a career, although they are willing to see their daughters follow it as a lightsome and not too prolonged vocation. When in need of recreation or a light avocation, these same strong men are likely to turn to art for its sedative and diverting qualities; or when, with wealth accumulated and leisure available, they seek outlet for unexpended energies, they may find in art gratifying opportunities for patronage, self-education, and public service.

## II

To the student of history or, more broadly, social evolution the fundamental importance of the various aesthetic arts that make appeal to and through the emotional nature of man is apparent.<sup>1</sup> *Homo sapiens* comes into the world equipped with instincts which cause him to react strongly to the stimuli, among others, which these arts have been invented to provide. One kind of music can move him to worship, another to fight, another to love, and a

<sup>1</sup> A sharp distinction must of course be made between "art," or "aesthetic arts" and "the arts." The latter (as "practical," "industrial," "mechanic," and "useful" arts, having to do with man's need of obvious utilities) are, in spite of similarity of names, often remote from "arts" and especially "fine" or "pure" art. The fundamental quality of "art" as here considered consists in its appeal to aesthetic sensibilities, and as a consequence of the appeal thus made its power stimulate, modify, or repress specific tendencies toward behavior, conduct or action, immediate or ultimate, individual or social.

fourth to work in concert. Perhaps a fifth, sedative and lulling, can give his jangled nerves much-needed rest. The drama at its best becomes a means of making men passionately aspire after or despise the forms of conduct in themselves or others, toward which end it is the desire of dramatist and actor to move them. Through painting and sculpture have been communicated countless messages to men and to women, young and old, who could receive vivid suggestion and direction through no other medium. Epic and lyric, the finished evolutionary products of recital, chant, and folk-song, long served as vital means of disseminating and socializing ideals, lores, sentiments, and percepts. Dancing at its best was doubtless long a valuable means of symbolizing for peoples only part articulate, various forms of co-operation, including those of defense, worship, and mating. Gracefulness of design and beauty of decoration, applied to the furnishings and utensils wherewith life must be lived and work done, served to give definiteness of standards and permanency of associations to the still plastic sensibilities and inclinations that make for domesticity, acceptance of routine, pride of craftsmanship, self-sacrifice, accumulation of wealth, and respect for unseen powers.

If we possessed sufficient data whereon to base sound conclusions as to social evolution, we should probably find that many forms of art had, during the long periods when they possessed great social vitality, a very large "survival value." That is, social groups that developed widespread and keen appreciation of these forms of art, closely accompanied by the demand for, and summoning forth of, great producers of the strong and vivid things in such art, other things being equal, possessed thereby great advantages in the struggle for existence as against other groups not thus reinforced and fortified. Under primitive and elemental conditions of society at least, all forms of co-operative action and of social control of the individual in the interest of social behavior seem to involve and to require abundant means of making direct and strong emotional appeals such as art, among other agencies, provides. Song, drum, and trumpet bring men together for war (doubtless the earliest crucial form of co-operation); chantey and tattoo make toil in concert endurable and even joyous; pipe and

chant mold the spirit for worship. Carved, painted, and woven decoration have served to give verity and tangibility to legend and tradition, and thus to promote like-mindedness among clans and tribes and sects; while painting and statuary communicate ideals and sentiments for which words are as yet inadequate. Probably all forms of persistent and elaborated art (confining the term chiefly to those products of human skill which are characterized by the emotional rather than the intellectual appeal which they make) have indeed had for long periods a large "survival value." They were therefore vigorously approved and cultivated because of vague recognition of that fact—such recognition itself being likewise a slow product of intuition and experience.

But do not needs similar to those confronting early societies for close co-operation and generous mutual aid still exist today? Do not these needs grow daily more intense and more pressing? Are not conditions such today, especially in all civilized countries, that the demand, conscious or unconscious, for all the forms of appeal which art can make or reinforce is waxing in volume and intensity? In the complications and interdependencies of modern society do we not more than ever require vigorous use of all social means that will integrate groups of men for work, defense, worship, and government; that will insure the right formation as well as stability of family life; and that will promote social integration and concerted effort generally? Can we allow to fall into disuse any instrument by means of which the imagination, ideals, sentiments, appreciations, and habitual attitudes of the individual can be so shaped that he may give to society the desirable conduct under all the involved and obscured conditions which render possible innumerable kinds of behavior, social or anti-social?

In brief, nearly all art had in the past quite definite, even if imperfectly manifest, social functions; it gave direction and reinforcement to the great social forces, those that made for the cohesion, unity, strength, persistence and wholesomeness of society, and, thereby, as a rule for the ultimate self-realization of the individual. This was conspicuously the case with all "great" art—the art that, though sometimes at first emanating from, and patronized by, a few, ultimately appealed to the thousands, the



art that was given wide publicity in places of assembly, that received approval and support at once of rulers and of ruled. Has art today, or can it, in its nobler manifestations, be made to have those same definite social functions? The social forces that thus once utilized and magnified art are still operative, certainly, but do they or can they make use of great art, noble art, serious art, as necessary means? In a fundamental sense the answers to these questions will probably interpret for us in part the present status and the probable future of the higher forms of art in America and in other countries controlled by the conditions and requirements of modern civilization. We must ascertain whether art still possesses the qualities which under present-day conditions, give it definite functioning possibilities in strengthening and orienting the social forces that, operating through the sentiments, understandings, and ideals of individuals, produce the society which weathers storms, survives, and ministers to the end of guaranteeing "life more abundantly"—the final known test of civilizations.

It is the belief of the writer that an examination of those forms of social activity which are most intimately involved in the survival and expansion of civilized societies will show an increasing dependence upon what may be called the helpings of science as contrasted with the helpings of art. Art still has its place in life, but not the prominent, proud, and glorious place it once had. Art can no longer lead; it must follow. It can no longer command; to make itself acceptable it must rather divert and entertain. In the great works and in the momentous crises of life man is more and more to be supported and reinforced by what he has accumulated in and for himself of scientific knowledge of the world, of assured insight into his own powers, and of definite mastery of natural and social forces. In considering these hypotheses let us examine successively a few of the fields of human conduct and activity in which the social functions of art seem to have diminished in comparative importance while the dependence upon science has increased.

### III

The problem of obtaining concerted action for war has always taxed to the utmost men's capacities for co-operation. At every

point in the recorded history of man we find him using music, dancing, bodily decoration, sculpture, painting, legend, poetry, oratory, drama—in fact, all manner of appeals to the emotions through the senses—to arouse the combative instincts and impulses and to produce co-operative fighting qualities with their accompaniments of endurance, loyalty to leaders, comradeship, and self-sacrifice which make possible the overcoming of enemies and the survival of the victors. When the defense of nationality is at stake, when the area over which concerted action must take place is large and the time of action long, the uses of art in producing and sustaining the moral and even spiritual qualities become marvelously varied and complicated. Heroic painting and sculpture, patriotic song, spirit-stirring music, ideal-arousing tale, and exalted oratory are all enlisted. The extent to which in very recent times this appeal to art as a vehicle of call to action has been made, sometimes deliberately, sometimes only as a revival of old customs and the belated expression of half-buried instincts, is one evidence of the persistence down into modern life of art-forms as a means of social strength and survival.

Nevertheless, though war today is a no less serious business than ever before, it is clear that in it, pragmatically considered, the various art-forms no longer retain their relative importance. Men no longer dance to the tomtom to arouse the fury required for the raid. They do not march to battle to the sound of trumpet, drum, and fife. They sing songs in the trenches, but, if report be true, these are not songs of rage, valor, or exaltation. Our soldiers must now discard the ornamenting sword, shako, epaulette, showy-colored uniform, and decorative helmet. Rifles and cannon no longer bear inscriptions delicately traced and beflowered. We say, indeed, that war has lost its glamor, its appeal to the ecstatic and heroic emotions. Smokeless powder, long-range gun, spying aeroplane, mine, and barbed-wire snare have rendered war a form of activity in which the simple emotional appeals have necessarily a subordinate place. Clarity of understanding, trained intelligence, stored knowledge of scientific procedure, coldly clear vision—these are the personal powers that are brought to the fore. Patriotism must be identified with the clearly understood higher

forms of self- and family-interest, else it has little meaning in and for modern conflict. We say modern war evokes no great poetry, perhaps little great fiction. Of course not; but as the price of national existence and individual liberty it evokes science, organization, method, prearrangement, calculation—the unemotional things of life. To the building up of all of these, the art-forms that strike chiefly and immediately toward the keener emotions and sharper sensibilities have little to contribute. Action must now be based relatively more on technical comprehension, less on intense and personal feeling. A background of ideal, shot with sentiment and emotion, there must always be, of course—perhaps more penetrating, pervasive, and enduring than ever before—but this is something not greatly to be affected by the crude appeals which the simple, striking, forth-right art-forms of the past have made. It grows from social understanding, the perceived ramifications of socialized self-interest, the comprehended significance of material aid and fair play. “With the songs of the North, the South would have won” in the Civil War, someone has said. Well, it would have made a great difference a thousand years ago, some difference fifty years ago, but probably none in the wars of tomorrow.

Art, at least as we have thus far defined and known it, has a diminishing place in war. It yields to science. Enlistment is hastened, it is true, by gaudy and imaginative posters; marching recruits sing “Tipperary”; “canned music” is welcomed in the trenches; and Kipling’s tales furnish pleasant relief from tedium. Art for diversion, relief, as a sedative, yes; but as a means of inspiration, as a force that counts in the final tale—hardly.

At certain stages in the evolution of societies it is religion that has evoked the most potent forms of art, especially those that affect and move the multitude. Appeal to, and propitiation of, respected and feared deities have always served to bring and hold men together. Worship in common has doubtless always had a large survival value for those groups which supported and controlled it effectively. In the various forms of worship, art with its powerful appeals to the feelings has commonly played a

large part. The unseen gods in imagined forms have been given representation in every kind of plastic material. The most cunning builders, craftsmen, and decorators have been employed to beautify places and accessories of worship. Vocal and instrumental music in a thousand forms has been used in praise of, and appeal to, the gods, and as a means of drawing others into the circle of worshipers. Religious revival and Salvation Army campaign always utilize in full the strong, simple arts which make direct emotional appeal.

And yet is it not fundamentally true that noble art or strong art or fine art is less urgently demanded and less vitally used, on the whole, in worship today than among people in prescientific stages of development? Those religious organizations which reached their full fruition prior to the last half-century still retain in large part their historic instrumentalities, but it is probable that the more emotion-arousing of these steadily diminish in potency. If this is so, what is the explanation? Undoubtedly, again, the cause must be found in the pervasive spread of scientific thinking, rational action, and an increasing demand for intelligible sanctions for social behavior. Among civilized peoples deities become more remote, more abstract, less anthropomorphic. We think of them less than formerly as possessing sensibilities to be appealed to through beauty of voice, dance, incense, decoration. Churches change tradition slowly, so it is not possible for us accurately to estimate the actual social vitality of art applied as a means of worship today among peoples who have become accustomed in other relations to view a substantial part of their universe in terms of the known, the scientific, the personal. But one notes the social activities of the modern church, the practical character of its architecture, the professionalizing of its music, the appeals to understanding in its sermons, and the tendency toward the merely decorative in its trappings, and concludes that the great arts of appeal to the emotional nature play a diminishing part inevitably in modern worship.

The extent to which art was used as a means of stimulating primitive man to prolonged and arduous work is not well known.

On the sea and in harvest field chantey, rowers' song, and field melodies have survived to yesterday. The "house-raising" festival and "husking bee" are probably survivals of social devices toward company effort which were once widely used. During the thousands of years when men were learning to hunt, fish, herd, till, harvest, clear forests, raise houses, and build roads together, innumerable devices making aesthetic appeal were certainly evolved. That festival, folk-song, legend, drama, dance, and pageant were favorite means is evidenced by the historic remains which can still be studied. It is said that forethought and thrift among present-day tribes of tropical regions can best be produced through holding in prospect reward of gaily printed cloths, bodily decorations, perfumes, and the music of the phonograph. Our European male ancestors gave much heed to the decorations of their persons with bright-colored trappings which today survive only in the dress uniform of the military officer, but which, curiously enough, seem also recrudescant among the ceremonials of those who most nearly constitute an American *intelligenza*, namely, our college faculties. It has been no light task for societies in the colder regions of the earth to make of primitive, individualistic, labor-hating man a social citizen, co-operating readily, toiling persistently, and saving thriftily; and in this task art once played a large part.

But it does so no longer. Men seldom sing as they work. Festivals no longer directly crown a recognized task accomplished. Providence is cultivated by other means than folk-song and drama. Our boys are contemptuous of the seductive tales of thrifty and industrious exemplars.

Yet it is indubitable that we now possess in larger measure than ever nearly all of the social virtues that have to do with economic well-being. How are we producing these virtues in each generation? Largely through appeals to understanding, to conscious self-interest in the individual; and also through organization of labor under the wage system and through the segregation of economic opportunities—hunting-grounds, fishing-streams, nut-bearing trees, tillable land—by means of private ownership. Only in time of crisis or revolt does the "Marseillaise" of the expatriated

stir the passions to demand a new economic adjustment, and bring men into step for a new form of co-operative effort. Doubtless the passion for the possession and ownership of that which makes aesthetic appeal—the jewel, the gown, the handsome saddle, the fine house—still lures men and women to toil even slavishly. But does the conscience of the country approve such use of the aesthetic response? Does it not rather frown upon it, as we frown upon that taste which seeks gratification in perfumery?

The suitable mating of men and women, so fundamental to sound social growth, has also involved historically the employment of every known form of art appeal. Love song, incense, body decoration, poem, dance, tale of precarious courtship, and the drama of passion or affection, all these, in multifarious form, evoked, irradiated, and brought to fruition the primal sex impulses, thus beautifying, ennobling, and stabilizing the various stages of the approach of men and women to, and union in, the family relationship. Can it be possible that in this field of human activity, too, art tends to lose its potency as a means to the realization of purposes socially worth while?

It is certainly a fact that the use of these art media in the preliminaries to human mating (otherwise marriage and parenthood) is diminishing in civilized groups. In the upbuilding of those types of family life that must constitute the sure foundations of a sound society we see everywhere displayed an increasing rationality, cool understanding, and intelligent regard for consequences to the individual and to society. Understanding men and women do not today, as a rule, lay the foundations of family life in disregard of economic, hygienic, and other social considerations; consequently they affect less, and yield themselves less to, the various forms of emotional appeal and stimulus of which our more naïve progenitors made such use.

We do still, indeed, expend time and energy heavily on forms of art which seem intimately associated with mating and other expressions of the sex instinct. We have the unending rivalries of our women in decorating and ornamenting their persons, ends to the subserving of which they have drafted some of the most highly

trained of the craftsmanships of jewelers, hair-dressers, weavers, garment-makers, and pharmacists. The elaborate artistry of the stage in its ballets, vaudeville songs, and "modern" dramas seems to center chiefly in cavortings about, and lubricities with, the sex life. The graphic arts applied as adjuncts to advertising and story-telling also do much to reinforce the sex appeal. Opera, "canned" and chamber music, dancing, fiction, and even modern modes of travel and outdoor recreation all seem permeated with endless varieties of the longings, obsessions, dallies, and unwholesome effluvia of the primal instincts which are basal to the family life. Where marriage is arranged by parents—marriages of prudence—art flowerings seem to be developed chiefly to elicit and adorn wayward coquetries and illicit unions. Even the short story and the novel, today the most vital of the forms of art interpreting, irradiating, refining, and inciting the primal sex and sociability instincts toward the complex relationships involved in family groups, are disproportionately devoted to the unfortunate short-circuitings, the abnormalities, and the perversions of the mating impulse.

But though we are often oppressed by the variety and magnitude of these developments, we must recognize that in a country like the United States they are far from being of fundamental importance. We should realize that these various forms of art-based activity are in part but elaborated manifestations and derivations of the play activities (including the sports of hunting and competing) possible to a prosperous people; and in part the manifestations of a pervasive morbidity always found in societies where individual prosperity and complicated social organization rapidly replace conditions of frugal life and simple group structure.

In other words, though we may seem to give art a large place in the fundamental and enduring mating activities of modern civilized society, such is not in reality the case. We leave the exercise of art in large part to the hangers-on, the philanderers, the "play boys," the self-seekers, the habitués of the purloins, of modern society. These naturally demand little in the way of madonna pictures, serene love songs, tales of "true love," simple gonnings, dramas of childhood, folk-dance; the multifarious forms

of art which they evoke and reward are flaunted on the "White Way" of every city. In the meantime the family as an institution survives and becomes more effective; in spite of the misgivings of those of us who see it chiefly under the artificial conditions of large cities, it is probably becoming more wholesome, more socially serviceable each year, as judged by the final standards of its excellence, namely, as an agency for bringing a reasonable number of children to competence for membership in the society of adults. A constantly larger proportion of men and women enter upon the family relationship with open eyes, fuller mutual understanding, and stronger determination to make their lives count well for self-development and right parenthood. In their mating, reason, understanding, and even science play an increasing part; they cannot afford to yield themselves to the emotional incitements and pointings which the art of today even in its rare nobler forms can make. Only the irresponsible ne'er-do-well dances himself into marriage; only the silly she-fool embarks unthinkingly on motherhood, unguided by reasoned consideration of its demands and responsibilities. Art in its currently known forms cannot serve well as a means to the intellect-guided, affection-based unions required and in growing degree found today—such seems to be the verdict of those who contribute most to the making of sound family life.

#### IV

Defense, work, worship, mating—these represent four of the fundamental forms of activity which at all stages of human evolution have been essential to survival and progress. The various forms of art have been freely used in the past as means of organizing, intensifying, enlarging, and giving persisting significance and fruitfulness to these activities. The evidence seems to indicate that in all these major fields art as a means tends steadily to be replaced by what is here to be called science as a means—that is, the organized and tested knowledges and instrumentalities of science.

Are there then no other spheres of human activity in which art has played and can still play a vital and important part?



It seems to the writer that as far back into the origins of society as we can go we find the beginnings of at least three minor social functions of art which have continued vitally to persist and even develop into the present, and which seem to promise still more extended developments in the future. These will be called here, respectively, the recreative, the advertising, and the refining functions of art in social life. These deserve to be called derivative, secondary, or minor activities as contrasted with the four groups of activities analyzed above, because they are involved much more with the enrichment or softening of life than with group survival and fundamental progress.

Having met and passed crises of passion, strain, and change of fortune, man seeks to recreate himself, to recover from the effects of too intense or too prolonged or too painful activity. He seeks diverting or avocational activities. These demands of the active spirit give rise to vital forms of art which satisfy aesthetic craving without unduly straining the emotional nature. The grief-stricken turn to the solacing song and the comforting music of instruments; the wearied muscle worker, resting, recreates himself with light literature, diverting music, moving picture, stage pleasantries, boon companionship, and the coarser satisfactions of drink, food, narcotic, and revelry; while the tired brain-worker, also making demands for soothing and diverting music, show, story, picture, dance, and food catering adds thereto effective demands for travel, club companionship, museums, sports, and when, financially able, building, "gentleman" farming, and collecting, in many of which activities he wants "taste," elements of the artistic, harmonies of form, color, sound, and thought. He does not want, in fact he is likely violently to resent, serious drama, "high-brow" literature, and elaborately architectural music. As for architecture and painting, when presented for serious contemplation and study, he simply "does not see them."

We have here among all human beings, from the child being soothed to slumber after a busy day, to the millionaire seeking surcease from the intense preoccupations of business life, a wide, varied, and growing demand for certain ministries which art in some of its endless forms best can give. We know as yet too little

of the psychological results of specialized work, or of the enduring sedatives of life to criticize adversely these ministries, even when offered by so modern and uncertain an art agency as the "movies."

We find, in the second place, that in practice art is being increasingly called into service for publicity in the endless and protean forms which that form of diffusion of information which we call advertising assumes under the seeming necessities of modern life. Advertising of one kind or another besets us at every turn. It is the purpose of advertising to make appeal, sometimes to the understanding, more often to the feelings, of those who are perhaps reluctant to heed. Frequently advertisers must win their way through obscuring understanding and through intensifying appeal to sentiment, taste, prejudice, passion; hence their methods may resemble those of wooers of old.

Advertising is not confined to those only who have goods to sell. The propagandist of faiths and ideas is fast learning new methods of publicity, among them those that employ the aesthetic arts as means. In a fundamental sense man's desire to give publicity to his power, his achievements his realized ambitions takes the form of large display of the embellishments of his person, and his possessions, as seen in the attention-commanding character of the architecture of his house, the trappings of his *entourage*, decorative character of his women folk, and the munificence of his largesse. In large part doubtless, the lavish enlistment of art by the modern woman of wealth and leisure in the embellishment of her body and her personally controlled surroundings is due far more to her strivings to give publicity to her success than to the requirements of the mating instinct.

To a peculiar degree the requirements of advertising are affected by competition. It is not apparent that the extension, elaboration, and artistic perfection of advertising is to any substantial extent bound up with the competition that involves race or group or stock survival, as are, or were formerly, very certainly, work, war, worship, and mating; but, generally speaking, success in competitive business at any rate is most surely dependent, under modern conditions, on advertising. Hence the tremendous and still

growing demands of advertising on all forms of art, and especially upon the graphic arts. It may be indeed that the expenditure of energy upon advertising will prove to be in large measure socially unproductive or even harmful, as is expenditure of energy on alcohol, opium, elaborate personal decoration, or gambling, but for the present we see this form of public appeal or publicity making of art a busily employed handmaiden.

The third social function of aesthetic art which seems still vital persists in all those fields of activity where, the ends of utility having been served, man desires refinements of form, color, organization, communication, and service such as reduce obtrusiveness, eliminate the non-essential or irrelevant, and tend to foster pleasant associations. In the world of material things this function of art is analogous to the sedative or solacing or recreative function of art in the world of things mental and spiritual. It is here that the useful arts come into hand-clasp with the so-called fine arts.

The man of pragmatic inclinations wants a house that shall certainly provide desired space and arrangement accommodations; it must in addition thereto be suitably weather-proof, durable, and economical. Having provided for these useful purposes he desires that sharp corners be rounded, inharmonious projections tapered into graceful shapes, raw-construction work tastefully overlaid, and perhaps that a touch of decoration be added. People, not yet art-crazed, desire furniture that is restful, safe, and durable; having these demands satisfied and within modest and restrained limits, they seek harmony of form and color as desirable adjuncts. To the practical man speech is essentially a useful means of intercommunication; and always subordinate to the requirements of such use he desires that speech be musical, moderately decorated with figure and ceremonial form, and faintly touched by sentiment. The craftsman, if of right mold, buys his tools with discriminating study of their practical serviceability in his work; but being assured of these qualities he places also an approving valuation on their beauty of form, color, suggestiveness, and even faintly upon their decoration. To all real readers of books it is only the stored wisdom of the pages that makes primary appeal; this end

being guaranteed, secondary considerations as to shape of volumes, decoration of covers, and artistry of printing receive attention.

The multiplication of possessions as made possible by modern civilized life, rising standards of living, and man's increasing power to render materials and forces flexible to his will, all serve to give increasing vitality to what are here called the refining functions of art. But there is in this field a constant temptation to subordinate the lesser to the greater function. We seem easily to be able to educate ourselves, under the influence of competition for possessions and especially for display of possessions, to the point where not the serviceability of the article, but the aesthetic art conspicuously applied in it becomes the chief attraction. Children were once taught painfully to make "beautiful" handwriting in its shadings and flourishes—whether it was legible and rapid or not. At times the desire for beautiful work in bookmaking outweighs unduly the demand for the really significant contents of the volume. We are overwhelmed with prevailing demands for furniture, fabrics, tableware, and raiment that shall primarily satisfy aesthetic sensibilities and only incidentally strictly fundamental needs. The connoisseur, in things embodying applications of art, is often a seducer. He perverts useful functions to base ends. Nevertheless, it is in this domain that our schools of "industrial art" will find their largest and most useful function. They at least should avoid the temptation to yield to "short cuts," to make of pleasant gratification an end, to prefer, figuratively speaking, the painted woman of the streets to the virtuous matron of the home.

## V

Art is in the doldrums at present because those of us who are most art-sensitive cannot or will not see that the world has moved past the stage where art can easily render its mightier services—that is the hypothesis, unpopular though it be, which is here submitted for consideration. If men prove to be able increasingly to control their desired destinies through the means that we call science, why should the world again mass the desires and strivings that formerly in the ages of faith and feeling produced a Homer, a Phidias, an Angelo, a Wren, a Palestrina, a Shakespeare? We

shall for ages continue to develop those individuals who have their interests in the historical aroused by Grecian sculpture, Gothic architecture, Renaissance painting, German music, seventeenth-century drama, and eighteenth-century poetry; and it will be a precious thing to have those gifted connoisseurs in our midst. Others will arise to preserve and develop curious interests in the psychology and architecture of Wagnerian opera, Russian ballet, futurist painting, and "problem" drama; and we cannot afford to suppress or discourage even these variants. Perhaps we shall yet discover through them, that some of these advanced "art forms" have after all some real social significance for modern times and conditions, and are not merely symptoms of art hysteria, or "sports" produced through breeding and cultivating the art impulse in unnatural soil.

For in some form there is always the possibility that art as one of the great engines of human progress, as an indispensable means of social evolution, may once again be in demand. We can conceive a world of human beings saturated with knowledge of "what" to do but in spite of clearly perceived self-interest weak in motives leading to action. We can conceive a situation where notwithstanding endless and perfect laws the will for justice might be so weak as to require the appeal to sympathy and passion of a "Marseillaise," a "Song of the Shirt," a "Burghers of Calais." We can conceive a series of photo-plays leading out from the "Birth of a Nation," as the Gothic cathedrals grew out of little stone churches, to the point where the feelings of countless millions would be swayed into uncompromising hostility against the causes which produce war, which debase the virtue of womanhood, or which promote the voluntary sterility of biologically good human stocks.

Nevertheless, if the contentions of this paper are sound, the outlook for "great art" for several generations to come is dark.

The world could not now put noble popular art to great uses if it had it; and this fact must eternally under present conditions baffle the potential creators of the noble art which could appeal to and sway the multitudes; for it is a postulate of the theses of this paper, though belatedly stated, that socially great art is

usually democratic or "popular" art. The favors of wealthy and self-glorifying patrons, over-persuaded trustees, and the few sincere devotees of *res tempora acta* cannot evoke the cumulative approvals and strivings that finally give the world enduring examples of socially influential art.

That art must usually be simply the culmination of innumerable efforts of emulative creators, each enheartened by a crowd of applauding followers, and each perhaps conscious of meeting only the demand of the moment. That which subsequent generations have appraised as among the greatest of the art products of an art-prizing era was often at the time born in obscurity, the bearer of it as unconscious of the future repute of his creation as was the mother of Lincoln unaware of the fame that would come to her son. It was simply one of the unnumbered contributions to a public demand as massive and persistent as is today the demand for lifelike photography.

Art is in the doldrums today because those who must express themselves through aesthetic media are discontented at being restricted to lesser and subordinated missions. The artists and the most appreciative followers of art appear to think that we can and ought to restore the past. They cannot and will not believe that the current of life has carried the world into new regions where men must use and learn to pride themselves in the use of new instrumentalities. The possible ministries of art dwindle in those fields of human activity where great movements are astir and deeds of great consequence are being done. But in the groves where men recreate their energies and take the passing satisfactions of life, it still in minor forms makes its appeals and has its values.